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by the Arabs and Bemba, built their huts within a stockade.[1] According to Thomson, the Nyakyusa were unaware even of the existence of Lake Tanganyika in 1879 and their more distant eastern neighbours, the Pangwa, Bena, and Hehe had no communication with them.[2]

Unlike the Nyakyusa, the people of Ngonde were trading with the coast long before the arrival of the Europeans, a fact which had a profound effect on their political institutions;[3] but even they did not suffer from the attacks of slavers until *after* Europeans were established in Karonga.

From the point of view of the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people the Europeans came just in time. It was the establishment of British control in Nyasaland which prevented the complete destruction of the people of Ngonde by the slavers, and it is likely that the Nyakyusa also were saved by European intervention, for the raids of Arab slavers and their Sangu allies were becoming serious in Kukwe country in 1889[4] before the German annexation.

The first Europeans known to have sighted Nyakyusa country were a party from the Livingstonia mission (then established at the south of Lake Nyasa) who circumnavigated the Lake in the mission steamer, the *Ilala*, in 1875. They anchored off the north shore but did not land.[5] Two years later, the same steamer sailed by two famous missionaries, Dr. Stewart (of Lovedale) and Dr. Laws (of Livingstonia), landed Frederick Elton, H.B.M. Consul at Mozambique, and a party near the Mbaka mouth.[6] Elton and his party travelled through Selya and Kukwe country to the fort of the Sangu chief, Merere, and thence started for the coast. Elton died on the road, but some of the others got through.[7] In 1879 Joseph Thomson (aged 20), alone with his carriers, travelled through Hehe and Bena country, crossed the Livingstone moun-

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), pp. 286–7; Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 13–5; 269.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., pp. 248, 276.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., *passim*.

[4] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 238–41, 288. The Sangu had previously been occupied in a prolonged war with the Hehe. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 374; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 229–34.

[5] E. D. Young, 'On a recent Sojourn at Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXI (1877), pp. 230–1.

[6] J. Stewart, 'The Second Circumnavigation of Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, pp. 289–304.

[7] Elton, op. cit., pp. 318–44; Consrill, op. cit.

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tains to the north-east corner of Nyasa, and went on through Nyakyusa country to Lake Tanganyika.[1]

Despite the isolation of the Nyakyusa and their own fear of travelling in foreign chiefdoms, they were not inhospitable to these white strangers: Elton and all his party (some of whom were delayed by illness and travelled separately), and later Thomson, walked up the Nyakyusa valley in safety though it was 'teaming with armed warriors', who carried 'most cruel-looking spears'. Elton remarks that 'the people of Konde, though not unfriendly, are passively obstructive, and being in want of nothing are disinclined to render any services whatsoever to strangers'.[2] But Thomson appears to have been on the best of terms with the Nyakyusa he met. The Kukwe fled from their villages at Thomson's approach, but were usually persuaded to return.[3]

After these journeys of discovery, mission work and trade developed quickly. The African Lakes Corporation, a company formed to develop legitimate trade in Central Africa as a means of combating the slave trade, established a station at Karonga; and a road was surveyed from Karonga through to Lake Tanganyika.[4] Out-stations of the Livingstonia mission were set up at Chirenji (Mwini Wanda) in the hills north-west of Karonga, and at Kararamuka near Tukuyu.[5] Meantime, an Arab slaver, Mlozi, had settled in Ngonde, and a protracted struggle ensued between him and his Henga allies on the one side, and the people of Ngonde and the Europeans on the other, during which many Ngonde were enslaved or killed and their villages destroyed. Five thousand Nyakyusa spearmen came to the aid of the Europeans but, being more concerned with loot than with the defeat of the Arabs, they returned home with the goods they had taken instead of pursuing Mlozi and his men when they had the chance to do so.[6] Lord (then Captain) Lugard was for some months in command of the exiguous European force and its allies, and nearly

[1] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 260–86.
[2] Elton, op. cit., p. 332.
[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 281–2.
[4] Fotheringham, op. cit.; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923).
[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI, 1890, pp. 281–93.
[6] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 117–23.

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died of wounds and fever. Because the Europeans lacked arms the war dragged on,[1] and the power of the slavers was finally broken only in 1895, when Sir Harry Johnston came up the Lake with a well-armed force.[2]

German missionaries of the Berlin and Moravian missions arrived in 1891, and established themselves at a number of stations in Nyakyusa country.[3] The Songwe had by that time been agreed upon as the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa, and the German administration followed hard on the heels of the missionaries.[4] Twenty years later war broke out between England and Germany; there was fighting throughout Rungwe district, and many Nyakyusa were impressed as carriers. The absorption of the Nyakyusa into a world society was considerably accelerated by war.

### *d. The form of Nyakyusa society*

Not only was the Nyakyusa valley long isolated from the outside world, but it was divided into a number of small, independent chiefdoms, whose members had few dealings with people beyond their own chiefdoms and those immediately adjoining. Each family produced for its own needs, so that trade was the merest trickle; and marriage outside the boundaries of the chiefdom was discouraged, since beyond the jurisdiction of one's own chief there was no security for life and property. A plea against a man of a neighbouring chiefdom might not be heard by the defendant's chief. Nyakyusa men enlarged to us on the dangers and difficulties of travelling even twenty miles from home, before the coming of the Europeans; a journey from Selya to Tukuyu (twenty-five miles) was said to take three days, because travellers had to seek cover so often.

The number and size of chiefdoms varied; for a continuous process of splitting, together with periodical conquest and reabsorption, was going on and, as we have seen, the area of Nyakyusa occupation was expanding. In 1938 the Nyakyusa themselves

[1] Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 51–167.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 143.
[3] A. Merensky, *Deutsche Arbeit am Njassa* (1894); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland* (1912).
[4] F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX (1906).

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ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119–20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

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This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses.

*c. Communal responsibility of the age-village*

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116).

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages;

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

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684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
696 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of
●721 a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neigh-
686 bours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
696 little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

672 War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a
696 settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kalunda and Mwalubunju explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
701

[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 86.

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account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave.

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.'

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

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torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead, there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

### *d. Social separation*

One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60–1.

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764 alone as if fighting a single combat. Among the men some of the
535 women move about, singly or in twos and threes, calling the war-cry and swinging their hips in a kind of rhythmical walk. Under a tropical sun in a damp heat, with the thermometer often over 90° F. in the shade, they dance for hours. In the dust and noise and excitement there are no very apparent signs of grief; and yet if you ask the onlookers what it is all about they reply: 'They are mourning the dead.'

764 This burial dance is traditionally a dance of war; now, as also
535 in former times, it provides those men who are most affected by
● 721 grief and fear with a violent and passionate means of expres-
177 sion, in which their feelings are assuaged by the touch of life; for the others it was, in the old days, an assertion of their own and their dead neighbour's warlike quality, and this significance is still vividly present to their minds; but, after a generation and more of peace, its content is changing and the sexual element, always present in it, is rapidly dominating the old memories.

764 'This war-dance (*ukukina*)', said an old man, 'is mourning, we
535 are mourning the dead man. We dance because there is war in
721 our hearts. A passion of grief and fear exasperates us (*ilyojo likutusila*).' Since this statement is the clue to both the present and the traditional meaning of the war-dance for the chief mourners, we must examine the language carefully. *Ilyojo* means a passion of grief, anger or fear; *ukusila* means to annoy or exasperate beyond endurance. In explaining *ukusila* one man put it like this: 'If a man continually insults me then he exasperates me (*ikusila*) so that I want to fight him.' Death is a fearful and grievous event that exasperates those men nearly concerned and makes them want to fight. The chief mourners and personal friends among the women assuage their feelings in the wailing, among the men in the war-dance. 'A kinsman, when he dances, assuages his passionate grief (*ilyojo*); he goes into the house to weep and then he comes out and dances the war-dance; his passionate grief is made tolerable in the dance (lit. he is able to endure it there, in the dance), it bound his heart and the dance assuages it.'

This exasperated and fearful grief was linked in traditional expression with a general salute to the warlike quality of man. Those of old said: 'The dead man was a lively dancer in battle, and now he is dead we dance for him, he too was a fighting dancer!' 'He was a warrior (lit. a man of the spear), we dance now, as he danced himself, the dance of war.' And this salute at the same time gave

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to the dancers a heightened sense of their own warlike quality: 764
'We used not actually to fight at burials so much as to dance and 535
become conscious of our strength for future wars against other 721
chiefdoms, when, on another day, we would go to raid their cows.'

But although an actual fight was not a necessary part of the 578
funeral it very frequently occurred; and burials are still one of 764
the most usual occasions of spearing. 'In the old days, before the 721
country was at peace, we men often fought at burials; we ran in 535
front spearing one another, while our wives ran behind calling the
war-cry and watching the prowess of their husbands.' So far from
rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as [182]
some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were
occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt
expression in fighting and new antipathies arose; but the quarrels
were not within the mourning lineage.

The fights normally followed the lines of division between chiefdom and chiefdom, village and village. Kinship and affinity have always for some men extended beyond the single chiefdom; and to the burials of these people, if they are in any way eminent, the young men of other chiefdoms often come to dance. And while today, with a well-established tradition of peace, there are fewer smouldering enmities between chiefdoms, forty or fifty years ago it was scarcely possible for the young men of two chiefs to meet peaceably; cattle-raids, abductions of women, defeats and victories in battle were too hot in the memory. Sometimes an accidental jostling, sometimes a deliberate insult was the occasion for a running fight.

At burials there was often war. If the men of two chiefdoms were there together at a burial they would quarrel and fight. Sometimes the fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and then pulled it up so as to pitch earth on to another man. Perhaps there would be only a few men dancing at first and many sitting down; but when a neighbouring chief was heard coming with his men, and the sound of the trumpet and flute[1] came to us, then we said: 'If we sit still they will say there were no men but only women at that burial, let us dance too!' So we would get up and dance, and then if the others did anything there would be war.

And fights sometimes occurred between two villages of the same chief.

[1] The trumpet of horn and the bamboo flute which used to accompany the war-dance. They are now seldom heard; drums have superseded them.

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764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
535 slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the
721 swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that
534 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
832 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
837 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid tradi-
[684] tional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
832 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

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tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!' And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter!' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*mogi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' The word *mogi* is from the verb *ukumoga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its significance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recreation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild mêlée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

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535 764 721 177 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 764 177 832 727 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

781 764 The emotional quality of mourning (*ukulila*) is different in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



781 man; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family
764 fear spiritual afflictions as well.

[811] These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent those happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

781 But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a
764 death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression
● 721 in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also
535 proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief: 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief exasperates us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

781 It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the
764 whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the eating of great quantities of meat.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would far exceed ours. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalize' properly implies neither truth nor falsehood of thought but simply the fact of its existence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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scrapes bananas when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not have diarrhœa, because it is my blood; she is my relative (*nkamu gwangu*), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhœa to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhœa and get rid of it, she oversteps me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am overstepped. To overstep is to insult—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty!

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhœa they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow.

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipaja, was war. We feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, have so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: "This is my place! Why do you kill my people?" '

Others confirmed Mwambuputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the woman.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of the shades seated there.

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhœa because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

ANGOMBWIKE: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*nkali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*nelyojo*), she is fierce (*nkali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*nkali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwaisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will *attack* the husband of a preg-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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754

Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

764 Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went.

761 On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words.

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

754 MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chiefdom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya 721 ● was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had 689. been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows.

764 We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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## CHAPTER XIII

# Konde Warfare

THE men of Munsoso were hunting, and came to the land of Mwakarobo with their "bag." Mwakarobo's men crept up while the tired hunters were resting in the shade of the trees, and carried off the birds. 721 ●

"Why do you steal our birds?" demanded the angry hunters.

"We don't talk with fools," sneeringly replied the others, as they went off with the booty; "get off home, or one man of us will chase the lot of you."

Home the hunters went, and great was the uproar in the village when the tale was told. "I am an old man," cried the indignant chief, "but we must fight."

"Don't speak of it," said his sons, "let the spear talk."

Next day the fighting men went forth at dawn, and burned a few huts in Mwakarobo's village, from which the defenders, unable to prepare a defence, had removed all the women and cattle. A few days later, having made an alliance with some neighbouring chiefs, Munsoso attacked in force, and drove Mwakarobo out of his country, which to this day he has never recovered.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17



721 Not all Konde wars arose from such trivial causes, or had results so trifling; but much of it was of this petty nature: wife stealing, cattle stealing, insults, civil war to drive out an unpopular chief, were among the causes. More important were the wars waged to acquire new territory, as in the wars of the first Chungu, and the conquests made by the Sango and Kinga chiefs some generations ago. There were, properly speaking, no religious wars, nor was there any desecration of sacred places; but there is an interesting tradition of a tribe which determined to accept Mbasi as God, contrary to the decision of the other tribes, and was severely defeated in battle; and Mbasi, about whom more will be said in another chapter, has ever since been regarded as a deceiver. If there is anything in the tradition, it indicates a certain amount of loose cohesion among the tribes.

721 787 Approaching war was foretold by prophecy and by portent. The *abakunguluka* (prophets) declared that for the sins of the people war was coming; the same terror was foretokened if the horns of the new moon were not of equal length, or if the cattle bellowed at night without obvious cause. But when a chief wished to go to war he held secret council with his headmen and official advisers, the objective of the war being almost always to "eat" the cattle of another chief. Usually it was agreed literally to sleep upon it. If one of the dreamers had a war-dream, as he might very well have, he told the others, and all together went to inform the chief. In these dreams, the progress of the fight was foreseen, and the result,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17



including the individuals killed, was told to the chief. 721
If the dream was favourable, confirmation was sought. 787
The chief took his zebra tail of office, poured oil into it, and hung it up in the house of his chief wife. If during the night it exuded cattle dung and blood, the sign was good; if blood only, it was bad. Blood indicated the death of men, but that was of secondary importance if the dung was there which indicated spoil in cattle as the result of victory. Along with the tail was hung up the chief's spear, which now gleamed and glittered like fire in the night, while the tail moved about with a swishing sound, indicating that the spirits urged battle. All this took place in the presence of the chief and the principal medicine man only; and their report was published in the morning, when the blowing of a horn summoned all males to the meeting-place. "My children," says the chief, "we are hungry. Let us eat the cattle of so and so." But he gives the name, not of the real point of attack, but of some other chief living in another direction; for there was always the possibility of traitors in the community, who would carry warning to the enemy.

A wild scene of hurry followed. Spears were 726
collected and sharpened, defects attended to, new 789
hafts attached. The shields were examined and strengthened if necessary. If there was a blacksmith in the village he was besieged by warriors whose weapons had become rusty or useless, all eager to equip themselves for the spoil. But man and weapon are alike useless until they have been given power and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17



roll of the Great War was a terrifying revelation of the unyielding nature of the Europeans in a quarrel. 727

Individual chiefs had special methods of securing victory. Mwamakula's wife, when her husband marched out with his forces, sat on a live sheep as long as the fighting went on: so assuring good luck to her husband in taking cattle, and preventing them running away when taken. Another wife sat on a cooking pot, to keep the enemy in a state of security while the warriors were closing in on them. They would go about as usual, unaware of danger, cooking and eating, until the storm burst, and there was no hope of defence. His sister had a *lusero* similar to the one carried into battle; and one of his old men lay down on the path, each soldier stepping over him as he passed on. While the fight was being waged, this old man sat on his haunches and pulled himself forward in that position, the effect being to make the enemy run. The *lusero* was carried hereditarily by Mfwimi, and when he laid it down it moved forward of itself as the enemy retired. 726 789

In the north there was a great prophet, whose presence in the battle always assured the victory to his own side; but if he retired, even for a moment, the battle turned, and he was brought back, by force if necessary. 726 792

Two great wars still stand out in the minds of the people: the victorious march of the Angoni, and the slaving invasion of the so-called Arabs. Both these enemies brought with them methods of fighting unknown to the Konde, who fled before the Angoni, 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17



721 driving cattle and carrying what they could carry: men and women flying naked for greater swiftness: until the great Sango chief Merere, who is said to have had three hundred guns, inflicted a severe defeat on the invaders. After that the Konde made a few feeble attempts to stand, but they came to nothing, and the Angoni passed like a scourge through the land. Against the Arabs a better fight was made, but it was with the help of the white men who at that time began to enter the Konde country.

The Konde were and are a timid people. The terror of the Arabs has passed, but the fear of the Angoni is probably a present fact. In August, 1914, some of the leading men at Karonga came to me. "All you white men," they said, "will be summoned to fight in your own country, and we shall be left without protection from the Angoni." I tried to reassure them, but without success. "No," they said, "three days after you go they will be upon us, and take away all our cattle as they did before." Possibly a more courageous spirit now obtains. A band of Angoni were enlisted for special work at Karonga in the early months of the war, and showed themselves so averse from anything like danger, that the reputation of the whole tribe, quite undeservedly, went down to zero. "The fear of the Angoni," said some Konde to me at that time, "is gone. If they were to come upon us now, we would fight them." But it may be doubted whether any but a few have really lost their old fears.

726 The Konde were never organized for war, and there was no military caste. Everything connected with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17



confesses, the party returns to the village, and the diviner is called to discover the culprit. 787 224

If two elephants are found kneeling and facing each other, some one's wife has erred in his absence, and the hunt is stopped until justice is done. An elephant taking up dust with his trunk and offering it to another, shows that some one has offered snuff to another man's wife, a most significant action, demanding immediate satisfaction. If an elephant is seen touching the teats of another, a similar action has been committed in the village, and again the hunt stops for inquiry and punishment. Trumpeting elephants are a sign of quarrelling in the village, and one plastering its face with mud is a sign of death, for the women at the death-wail cover their faces with mud or chalk. The hunters return, and do not resume until all is clear again. It is most important that not only the hunters should be free from evil, but their friends also, for evil brings them into danger, and it is the duty of all in the village to see that the natural dangers of the hunt are not increased by unnatural evil in their homes. 825

7. War was foretold by the prophets, but confirmatory signs were usually not wanting. If the horns of the new moon were of unequal length, an enemy was known to be approaching; necessarily an enemy from a distance, for the phenomenon must have been visible over a wide area. The same terror was announced by a cow bellowing at night, if there was no known cause for its outcry. This, naturally, is a thing of the past, as war, at least native war, has 787 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17



787 ceased. What significance would now be attached to
●721 these omens, I do not know. The buffalo, like the
[825] elephant, does not lie, and wise men heed its warnings. Many years ago a man called Masapa went to the Kinga region, where he quarrelled with the people, and barely escaped with his life. His chief, Mwaisumo, took up the quarrel, and prepared to invade the enemy's territory, undeterred by the predictions of defeat which came in dreams to his prophets, until, on the way, one of his men was killed by a buffalo, and this was a warning not to be disregarded. On their return home, they were received by their women folks, not with contempt and mocking, but as wise men, who were too wary to tempt "Providence" by foolish action. One more war omen. If a man, on the point of leaving for the field of battle, was suddenly, but accidentally, seized by the wrist by his wife, he laid down his weapons, and quietly stayed at home; not for him the joy of battle; he would have been killed, and no one thought the worse of him for heeding the omen.

781 8. Foretokens of death are so numerous that it is
763 difficult even to classify them. Whatever is rare, or unnatural, or sudden, may be taken as a warning of approaching death. A mole seen by day, is a rare event, and full of dread. A Christian living near me saw this wonder in February, 1923, and in the same month he got news of the death of a friend a hundred miles away! No connection? He thought there was. To see the *kasuchi*, a small aquatic animal, is to see something so rare that its appearance must be the

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17



622 secular affairs of his own age-villages and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and cows of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief; this priesthood they handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chiefship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief field of friendship, members recognizing greater obligations to each other than to outsiders; before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

624 The great commoner of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence; for instance, no kinsman of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them in war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

### Warfare

●724 A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Among the Ngonde, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyungu neither preventing it nor taking any part. In tribal warfare he did not remain impartial, but gave orders and told the chiefs to pray. They first called on the sacred groves of the buried Kyungus, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the territorial nobles also fought, they did not pray to their ancestors, for tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue in cattle and slaves. The recurrent civil wars of the period before the Ngoni invasion show that in spite of the heirarchical façade the centralized political organization was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bemba or Ngoni invasion.[3]

### Justice under the Traditional System of the Ngonde

692 There was no central court of appeal at Mbande to which the ordinary man could bring cases direct, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. At the capital the only cases dealt with by the nobles of Ngonde were cases of treason against the Kyungu (mainly adulterous approach to his wives), which were summarily punished by death. They also used the Kyungu's authority in punitive expeditions against insubordinate chiefs. Each noble of Ngonde decided the cases in his own field. Each great chief held an appeal court to which cases from all the chiefdoms of his house came, for of all the descendants of the Kyungu the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. Some of the territorial nobles also had the power. It was resorted to not only in witchcraft cases, but in appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 278–82. [2] Ibid., p. 276. [3] Ibid., 5, 1939, pp. 59–63.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17



so, one of his neighbours, had wronged and defrauded the apprehender. So the father would visit the wrongdoer and tell him that his own child had been caught because of him; and he would enquire into the case and the wrongdoer would pay what was due. After the payment had been made the child would be returned to its father annointed, with its head shaven and bringing a gift." Now this, it must be emphasized, was not a violent but a truly legal procedure. It seems only to have been taken in clear cases when the debt was not seriously disputable at law, and all that was required was machinery to enforce its payment. It was a procedure generally accepted throughout Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa; the father of the child seems not to have resented it, and, being "a powerful man,"[1] he was able to put pressure on his defaulting neighbour.

But these forms of procedure were insufficient to keep the peace in Ngonde. In the Ngonde plain at least, much the same law was common to all the fiefs and chiefdoms, but it was only enforced piecemeal in little local areas, or, beyond them, in occasional clear cases by the enquiry or the hostage method. And so quarrels, either between commoners or chiefs, led not infrequently to violence and war.

Now this situation requires to be explained. Why did the Kyungu and his subordinates not develop an effective judical system on the lines of the religious and economic hierarchy? I am not confident that our evidence supplies a certain answer, but there are two facts which, in combination, go some way towards doing so.

The crucial point is that, as we have already noticed, the conditions of life in Ngonde in the middle period, did not necessitate the development of such a system. Most of life for most men was confined to the little local areas, within which law was effectively maintained. There it had to be maintained somehow, or life would have been impossible. But beyond them men had only occasional relationships. War was endemic in the society of Ngonde but did not threaten to destroy it; and it is only that threat that can compel men to set up new machinery. The warfare of Ngonde was sporadic only while fights were matters of an hour or two and casualties were slight.

Nevertheless there were other areas in primitive Africa in which paramount chiefs and their subordinates did maintain law and order with some success, and in which civil war, though it occurred, was treated as a crime. Why was this not done in Ngonde? For, though centralised justice may not have been necessary, it would have had many obvious advantages. I believe that the answer to this question lies

[1] i.e. a rich man with a certain local prestige and authority.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17



even here it was rather position than area that was at stake : " We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge.

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners ; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority ; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success ; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat.

" In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) " No, he did not. For both ' the cousins ' and ' the sons ' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

### (b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *valukuta* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally : " And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying ' That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray."

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17



726 manner to his own predecessors in his title. The territorial nobles, however, did not then pray to theirs, although they went to fight; tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. The Kyungu himself remained behind in his house praying for their success. Some of the nobles of Ngonde went with the expedition, carrying the magic war-tails of the Kyungu, his spear *Kamisa* and a magic horn.

721 The territorial nobles of the hills, we were told, were not summoned to take part in tribal wars or punitive expeditions. And this fact is perhaps the clearest evidence of the relatively slight hold which Mbande had upon them. Nor, even in the plain, were the Kyungu's orders invariably obeyed without question. It is said that when Mujombe appealed for help against the Bemba chief Kyepele (=Cepela) Kyungu Mwangonde at first ordered the chiefs of Ngana to go alone to the war, without Mwakasungula. For Mwakasungula was his only surviving adult son and he feared to lose him. But the chiefs of Ngana refused to start without Mwakasungula, who in the end went with them.

726 The same warning that preceded a civil war was given by the men of Ngonde in tribal warfare also. "When the Kyungu sent his people against strangers he always forbade any surprise attacks, let there be parley first and explanation; let them point out that they had no wish for war, that it was the others who had forced war on them by wantonly killing one of their men (or whatever the reason was). We never fought like the Ngoni, always we explained our case first, asking why, if the other side had any just cause for their actions, they had not refrained and come and talked it all over with us. And so it was in the war against Kyepele, we explained our case."

727 567 We have seen already that the booty of punitive expeditions was divided among the chiefs and nobles who had fought and the Kyungu, and so it was in tribal warfare also. War was an important source of revenue for Mbande, bringing in both cattle and slaves. The war against the Bemba Kyepele (=Cepela) is particularly remembered for the number of slaves which Mwakasungula and the other chiefs brought back from it. While discussing slavery with some men of Ngonde one of us remarked that there had been little or no slavery among the Nyakyusa. "Yes, indeed, that is so: there was a lot of slavery here in Ngonde and very little among the Nyakyusa, because here people were captured in war. From Kyepele, for instance, a great host of slaves was captured and every chief at that time had Bemba slaves.

"And it was the custom for every chief to take a certain proportion of the slaves he had captured and hand them over to the Kyungu." (Why?) "Because they thought that it was his prayers for success that had enabled them to fight so well, to rout the enemy and to capture slaves

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17



and wealth." Once again we see how closely connected were the religious powers of the Kyungu with his wealth.

And the military authority of Mbande, like that of the lesser rulers, was correlated both as cause and as effect with the other factors of its general political status. The central power rested in part on its military functions: it was a tribal rallying point for defence against alien attacks, together with the hierarchy which depended upon it, it provided the necessary large-scale organization for military success, its religious powers were never more valued than in wartime, while victory brought wealth and prestige both to the Kyungu and his subordinates. But, as comparison with the Nyakyusa shows,[1] it was only the flow of wealth up and down the hierarchy, in combination with the religious functions of Mbande, that made this large-scale military organization possible.

### (c) *WARFARE AND AUTONOMY.*

Now warfare is, at one and the same time, an example of order and of disorder in human society. By social order I mean the systematic overcoming of lesser autonomies within existing wider groups: the overcoming of individual autonomy within the family and the local community, the overcoming of family, local and other autonomies within the tribe or state, the overcoming of tribal and state autonomies within still wider groups. By social disorder I mean the temporary overcoming by a lesser autonomy of the forces of some existing wider group. Legal procedure is one of most obvious examples of order, crime is one of the most obvious examples of disorder.

But warfare falls between these two extremes. Seldom are lesser autonomies so completely overcome as they are within a group at war, never is the autonomy of that group more clearly dominant over the forces making for a wider order. And it is of fundamental importance for the understanding of any social field to see which groups within it have both sufficient unity and sufficient autonomy to engage in recurrent warfare with one another. The size of the groups which go to war is one of the marks by which we distinguish primitive from civilized societies ——the smaller the warring groups the more primitive the society.

Now the recurrent civil wars of Ngonde in the middle period of its history show us that, beneath its hierarchical facade, it was a society of the same kind as that of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe; the centralized political organization was too weak permanently to overcome the local autonomies of village, fief and chiefdom. It is true that the mercantile divinity of Mbande gave sufficient unity to Ngonde to enable it to fight as

[1] *Vide infra* p. 64.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17



a whole against the Bemba and the Ngoni, and that the poverty-stricken divinity of Lubaga was unable to do this for the Nyakyusa;[1] but neither of them gave their people any high degree of unity among themselves.

For, while in both cases the hierarchical organization touched the common people in its religious and ceremonial aspects, in neither case did it much affect their everyday actions. In Ngonde, as we have seen, the wealth of the Kyungu, which he derived from the ivory trade, enabled him and his nobles of Ngonde to bind the other chiefs and nobles to him, in a way that the Lwembe and his hereditary priests could not do across the Songwe. But this wealth only touched the common people slightly and did not much alter the economic organization of the local groups. Nor had Ngonde any other common activities save tribal wars, religious rituals, and the hoeing of the *milasa*.

Horizontal as well as vertical relations must bind social groups together if their autonomy is to be permanently overcome, and in Ngonde, no less than among the Nyakyusa, the horizontal relations between the local groups were weak; while the religious seclusion of the Kyungus weakened the vertical relations also. The constitution of Ngonde consisted of a number of small and primitive local groups, all firmly attached to Mbande, but each one capable of swinging free[2] and of breaking the tenuous horizontal bonds that joined them among themselves.

Now a distinction must be made between these civil wars and the tribal wars with the Bemba and Ngoni. The civil wars point us to the disorder of Ngonde, a disorder which existed in spite of unifying factors; the tribal wars point us to lack of order which was hardly opposed by any unifying factors at all. No doubt there were occasional peaceful contacts between Ngonde and these other tribes, but they were clearly very slight indeed.

## 7. *POLITICAL CEREMONIAL.*

In every relationship of life there is some ceremonial expression of feeling. And towards the Kyungus of the middle period their subjects frequently expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

"At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu; the drums went '*kindé! kindé!*' And they would praise him in antiphony: 'O Kyungu!—Great Father! Great Father!—

[1] The Nyakyusa were attacked both by Sango and Ngoni but no tribal alliance was formed to meet these attacks.

[2] In the case of the chiefdoms this metaphor must be qualified by the intervention of the great chiefs between the local chiefdoms and Mbande, and the occasional unifying effect of this fact upon whole groups of chiefdoms.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have " come out " it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but cows ; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[19] The price of a cow is £2; but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akakwa*) of one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it ; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only profitable enterprizes in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly participate are those of hunting and fishing ; in some chiefdoms, but not

[19] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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769 796 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 796 In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned [721] from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, [782] the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrified for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 789 The majesty (*ubusisya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He [352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a [293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. [778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood.

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground:

> then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . .
>
> In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

### (c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).
A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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631 782 north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a [721] common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with [789] rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living [782] around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He [821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 173 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the [178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional 182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining 177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

631 628 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, *malafyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The [721] [648] integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 162 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 361 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 643 [796] [428] In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out" ceremony, *ubusoka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" ceremony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village headmen; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

621 [342] 631 [178] [622] [643] [888] After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. "At the "coming out" it is said that "everything is made new", boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated". Wilson, G., 1938, p. 31.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

| 1953 | No. of land cases | % of total civil cases | Estimated population density | Population per land case |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bukoba District .. .. | 1,189 | 23 | 69 | 223 |
| Lushoto Division .. .. | 149 | 12 | 188 | 742 |
| Moshi District .. .. | 347 | 25 | 277 | 746 |
| Ngara District.. .. .. | 81 | 29 | 125 | 1,393 |

## The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields farther and farther away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.